

66668

John Esteves Sr. Consumer/advocate
Testifying in favor of Bill 6668

My name is John Esteves. I am a person with a disability where I require the use a wheelchair for mobility. I am 43 years old. *I am the director of the Disability Resource Network Inc . I have been on the PCA Waiver Program for over 6 years.* In that time I have had over 10 different PCA's I have had to hire them , train them, only to lose them to higher paying jobs that also provide benefits . This is a problem that puts a person such as myself in a difficult position. I have had to miss work and I have had family members come to my aid at great cost to my family and friendships.

My son had to leave college and move back home to be my primary PCA for helping me shower in the morning to getting dressed and various other duties that in any other situation I would not have my son doing for me. My mother is my second PCA and is 67 years old but is the only reliable person that I can count on to be there at all times. I believe if the PCA's I had in the past who were reliable and trustworthy in my home would have been offered benefits and equal pay then they would have not left me for jobs that provide benefits .

As I said earlier I am the director of the Disability Resource Network. I employ 10 people who count on me to be at work every day. I also assist other persons with disabilities to get on the pca waiver program. Many of them suffer the same hardships when they lose their pca's to better jobs. Some become stuck in bed for days at a time. They have no one to prepare meals for them or even to check on them to see if they are OK and taking their proper medications.

They are at great risk to end up in a hospital or nursing facility, which would cost the state much more money then paying for benefits or higher wages to PCAs .

If our PCAs were able to have a voice through the work force council, I believe there would be a better database of PCA's that would be able to make this a career and provide backup when needed.

I along with other consumers that are on the PCA Waiver program support our Aides receiving higher wages and benefits through the quality work force council.

Sincerely ,

John P. Esteves Sr.